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Coordination, programme and other questions: International year for the Culture of Peace, 2000

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the state of preparations for the International Year for the Culture of Peace, 2000.

* E/1998/100.

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Annex

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the state of preparations for the International Year for the Culture of Peace, 2000

Summary

The present report on the state of preparations for the International Year for the Culture of Peace, 2000, for which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been designated as the focal point, is submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/47 and General Assembly resolution 52/13. It presents briefly the current state of preparations, which are an ongoing activity.

I. Background

1. On the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1997/47, the General Assembly, on 20 November 1997, adopted resolution 52/15 entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace". At the same session, the Assembly also adopted resolution 52/13 entitled "Culture of peace". These resolutions are closely related and mutually reinforcing, both promoting a culture of peace.

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/13, a consolidated report containing a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace will be submitted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in coordination with the Director-General of UNESCO, to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

II. Objectives

3. The objectives of the International Year for the Culture of Peace are consistent with the guidelines for international years, contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67, according to which the principal objective of all international years is to contribute to "the strengthening of universal peace".

4. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/47, the main objectives of the programme of activities for the International Year are to strengthen respect for cultural diversity and to promote tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, dialogue and reconciliation, based on activities at the national and international levels. It will mobilize public opinion at the national and international levels for the purpose of establishing and promoting a culture of peace and the central role that the United Nations system can play in this regard.

5. The preparations for the International Year are linked to the perspective of the declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace, foreseen by the General Assembly in resolution 52/13. Therefore, as stated in that resolution, its objective is to promote the transformation towards a culture of peace, which consists of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society.

III. Present status of preparations

6. As the focal point for the International Year, UNESCO has the responsibility to mobilize member States and to coordinate the organizational aspects of the programmes and activities of the other bodies of the United Nations system and other organizations concerned, as well as to mobilize resources to meet the budgetary requirements for the Year. Accordingly, the Director-General of UNESCO is in the process of consulting the organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the

contributions received from them will be incorporated in the preparation of the final report.

7. In keeping with the main objectives of the International Year, activities are being planned to be undertaken at the local, national, regional and international levels.

1. Activities at the local and national levels

8. At the local and national levels, the International Year may serve to stimulate and launch national action plans involving national commissions of UNESCO and other partners. In preparation for the Year, it is anticipated that pilot projects to mobilize widespread public participation will take place in 1999 in a number of States and involving intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. As the Year comes immediately before the International Year of Volunteers, UNESCO and the United Nations Volunteers may explore practical ways to ensure full synergy between the celebration and activities undertaken during the two years.

9. The International Year affords the opportunity to make national and regional actions broad-based, providing a special opportunity to promote reconciliation and national unity and to prevent violent conflicts. UNESCO is in the process of consulting its member States, since their support and collaboration in planning and executing activities will be highly valuable.

2. Activities at the regional and international levels

10. At the regional and international levels, the International Year will underline the priorities of peace, development and democracy and the central role that the United Nations system can play in promoting a culture of peace. Given the high importance UNESCO attaches to these major objectives, the organization is planning a number of activities, with a millennium vision.

11. The celebration of cultural diversity will be a major focus of activities to be undertaken in the framework of the International Year, especially to promote respect for the values of cultural identity, intercultural dialogue and cultural cooperation.

12. Activities for promoting non-violence will extend the effectiveness of the International Year and contribute greatly to the mobilization of the international community for the prevention and elimination of violence and for promoting a culture of peace and non-violence by way of a series of activities and programmes.

13. A series of promotional materials as well as scholarly and specialized publications will be prepared and disseminated on themes of major importance for promoting a culture of peace.

14. A calendar of mobilizing events will be scheduled for the International Year. In addition to those events prepared uniquely for the Year, many other events may contribute, including the UNESCO World Conferences on Higher Education (1998), Science (1999) and Communication (2000) and the review of the Beijing Platform for Action in March 1999. A series of special events will be planned to be undertaken during the thirtieth session of the UNESCO General Conference (October-November 1999). The Millennium Assembly and proposed Millennium Forum of non-governmental organizations planned by the United Nations for the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in the year 2000, will be associated closely with the programme of activities for the International Year.

15. Mobilizing public opinion to promote a culture of peace is an essential activity of the International Year. A culture of peace info-net, including both print and electronic media, and a global system of communication and information exchange may be established linking all of the partners and their work and emphasizing the involvement of young people.

IV. Perspectives

16. The year 2000 has a landmark significance, coming at the end of one millennium and heralding the beginning of a new one. It may be seen as a historic moment around which all people can mobilize for fundamental change. This is a unique opportunity to engage people in a common endeavour to effect the transition from the values, attitudes and behaviours of the past, which often led to war, violence and social injustice, to those values, attitudes and behaviours that can make possible a future characterized by a culture of peace. As stated by the Economic and Social Council in proposing the proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace, this provides "the opportunity to boost the efforts of the international community to establish and promote an everlasting culture of peace".